

The Acquisition Workforce Certification Program



**For the DoD Components
Outside the Military Departments**

October 1, 2003 - September 30, 2004

CERTIFICATION

The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act required the Department of Defense (DoD) to take certain actions to promote the professionalism of its acquisition workforce. One action taken by DoD was to establish a process through which persons in the acquisition workforce would be recognized as having achieved professional status. This process is called the Certification Program.

Certification is the procedure through which a DoD Component determines that an employee meets the education, training, and experience standards required for a career level (I, II, or III) in any acquisition, technology, and logistics career field. The typical grades associated with each of the levels are as follows: Level I - GS-05 through GS-08; Level II - GS-09 through GS-12; and Level III - GS-13 and above. This brochure lists the mandatory and desired standards for each of the career fields. These standards are strictly applicable in the DoD Components outside the Military Departments which are listed on the end panel of this brochure. The listed Components are authorized to certify employees against these standards; no other certification standards are authorized for use in these Components.

Normally, individuals should meet the career field standards for the appropriate career level before being assigned to an acquisition position at that level. Unless previously certified, all personnel appointed, promoted, assigned, reassigned, or detailed in excess of 120 days, to an acquisition position shall be reviewed for certification within 30 days of the effective date of the action. In cases where the potential assignee does not meet the certification standards, the certifying Component has 18 months after the assignment to qualify the individual to meet the standards or to process a waiver. An individual cannot be certified by a waiver; however, all or part of the certification standards may be waived by the appropriate Component authority.

Under the Certification Program, an Individual Development Plan (IDP) must be prepared by the super-

visor and employee (setting forth what education, training, or experience is needed and when and how it will be obtained) in the case of any acquisition workforce employee who has not attained certification at Level III in his or her primary career field.

EXCEPTIONS

The education, training, and experience standards for certification are usually met in traditional ways. However, there are other means of satisfying the standards. The alternate methods are as follows:

EDUCATION

A. For employees serving in contracting officer positions, GS-1102 positions or similar armed forces positions, or the contingency contracting workforce on September 30, 2000 or earlier, the education requirements for certification shall be possession of a baccalaureate degree or 24 semester credit hours in the business curriculum. For these individuals, these requirements shall not apply to any employee who, on October 1, 1991, has at least 10 years of experience in acquisition or similar positions in which the employee obtains experience directly relevant to the field of contracting.

B. For the Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering career field, the Functional Board has provided, for certification purposes, that any individual who had at least 10 years of acquisition experience in Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering as of October 1, 1991, has met the education requirement. Additionally, for the Test and Evaluation career field, the Functional Board has approved, for certification purposes, that an individual who had at least 10 years of acquisition experience as of October 1, 1991, has met the education requirement.

C. Testing can satisfy some education requirements. Employees in the Contracting career field required to

possess 24 semester hours in the business disciplines and who had less than 10 years of acquisition experience as of October 1, 1991, may meet all or part of the 24 hours through successful completion of examinations administered by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (DANTES). Eligibility requirements and application procedures are available on the DAU Home Page (<http://www.dau.mil>). Successful completion of DANTES exams can also be applied toward desired education standards for Level III in Program Management and Test and Evaluation career fields; Levels II and III in the Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering career field; and Levels I, II, and III in the Industrial Contract Property Management career field.

TRAINING

A. Use the fulfillment process. Previous experience, education, and/or training may satisfy mandatory training requirements. To use the process, an individual completes self-assessment forms provided in DoD Guide ADS-99-03-GD (*Mandatory Course Fulfillment Program and Competency Standards*) and obtains approval using the DD Form 2518 provided in the guide. Competencies and the DD Form 2518 are available via the DAU Home Page.

B. Complete a certified equivalent course. Approved equivalent courses are listed in the *DAU Catalog*. These include courses offered by certain colleges and universities, as well as courses offered by some DoD schools.

C. Pass an equivalency exam approved by the DAU. The DAU manages an Equivalency Test Program. Exam candidates must register for an exam in the same way students are registered to attend the course for which an exam may be substituted. The *DAU Catalog* lists the courses for which exams are available.

D. Complete a predecessor course. A listing of the numbers and titles of predecessor courses can be found in this brochure.

EXPERIENCE

Up to 12 months of time spent pursuing a program of academic education in acquisition may be counted toward meeting the years of experience required in any career field.

CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

The background for each person in an acquisition position must be compared to the professional standards prescribed for that position, and the person certified if fully qualified. Each Component is responsible for instituting detailed procedures for certification. Since procedures vary, Component officials must be consulted to determine the correct process.

CERTIFYING COMPONENTS

Office of the Secretary of Defense
The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
and The Joint Staff
U.S. Special Operations Command
The DoD Inspector General
Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
Missile Defense Agency
Defense Commissary Agency
Defense Contract Audit Agency
Defense Finance and Accounting Service
Defense Information Systems Agency
Defense Intelligence Agency
Defense Logistics Agency
Defense Contract Management Agency
National Imagery and Mapping Agency
Defense Security Service
Defense Threat Reduction Agency
National Security Agency
American Forces Information Service
Tricare Management Activity
Department of Defense Education Activity
Washington Headquarters Services
National Defense University
Defense Acquisition University
Defense Systems Management College
Uniformed Services University of the
Health Sciences
Joint Simulation System Joint Program Office

For further information regarding the Acquisition
Workforce Certification Program, please contact:

The Deputy Director of Acquisition Career
Management

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